

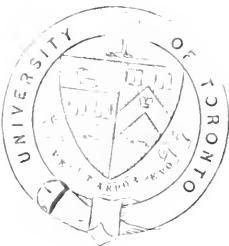
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Geramb, Ferdinand

Letter to Earl Moira... on the
Spaniards and Cadiz.

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LETTER
ON
THE SPANIARDS AND CADIZ.

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From the Author.

LETTER
TO
E A R L M O I R A
GENERAL OF THE ARMIES OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY, COLONEL
OF THE 27TH REGIMENT, PRIVY COUNSELLOR TO HIS MAJESTY,
CONSTABLE OF THE TOWER, &c. &c. &c.

ON
The Spaniards and Cadiz,
BY
BARON DE GERAMB,

MAJOR GENERAL IN THE SERVICE OF HIS CATHOLIC MAJESTY
FERDINAND VII, HUNGARIAN MAGNAT, ACTUAL CHAMBERLAIN
TO HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA, &c. &c.

*Translated and printed by Order of Baron Geramb solely for the
MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.*

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1810;

1971-1974

MY LORD,

I HAVE written to you from the banks of the Nile, the Neva and the Danube, I now address you from the banks of the Thames, where I hear you spoken of as I wish, and where I am proud of announcing myself as your friend, to men who are proud of being your countrymen.

To you, My Lord, who, naturally inclined to whatever is great, noble, and generous, know so well what heroism is, I feel an irresistible desire of speaking of the achievements and sublime ardour, by which the Spanish nation have been so highly distinguished in the impending crisis of their affairs,

and from which so fair a hope of their ultimate success may be indulged. Equal to the noblest deeds, as you have proved by the achievements which have already exalted your name to so illustrious a rank among your fellow soldiers, this opinion will be decided by your heart, which will tell you that efforts, inspired by loyalty, and animated by the love of one's country and the desire of independence, are as wonderful in their effects as they are glorious in their principle; and that the exertions of nations, pursuing these noble objects with the perseverance and energy displayed by the Spaniards, are almost always crowned with victory.

Having, as I may well say, attended to its grave the Monarchy, under which it was the will of heaven I should be born, and deeply mourning for it in my heart, I turned my thoughts towards a country which presented to me such scenes of heroism as I had just been witnessing in my own. I could no longer endure to look upon that family whom, from my infancy, I had been taught to revere, and whom I ardently loved from the moment I was susceptible

of affection—no longer bear to see my Sovereign and his family crushed by the ascendancy of the vanquisher, purchasing life by submission, and preserving their crown at the expense of their independence.

I once sketched the greatness of the House of Hapsburg Alas! after recording the brilliant periods of its glory, how could I contemplate its fall? How consent to sink into the accomplice or the instrument of those, who, under the pretence of raising it from its fallen state, counselled it to debase itself? For, there are times, when, by apparently serving our sovereigns, we but quicken the progress of their submission, and level the road which gradually and most painfully leads to their ruin.

In quitting my country, I took leave of my companions in arms with these words : “ Comrades ! we
“ have nothing more to defend here ; there are no
“ longer honourable rewards to excite our ambition ;
“ there is no glory to be acquired here : our ef-
“ forts to save our sovereign and our country have,
“ indeed, dignified their fall, but have not prevented

“ it. Galled as we are by defeat, our bosoms still
“ swell with the ardour of combating in a glo-
“ rious cause, and though a shameful peace baffles
“ our hopes, those hopes which called forth such
“ valour, daring, and loyalty, yet will we not be
“ fettered down in base inaction: I will go among
“ men still fighting for their country, and by shed-
“ ding my blood for them, gain an asylum or a grave.
“ If that nation still standing amidst the ruins of
“ the continent, and offering a rallying point to all
“ who would be free, persevere in her energy, and
“ possess but a corner of her territory where her
“ battles may be fought, I will send for you, and
“ we will share her struggles and her fate.”—Their
reply was: “ Go, we will not disappoint you.” They
thought so then; they really meant to come
and moisten with their blood a land so productive of
heroes. What shall I say, my Lord? Fate has deter-
mined otherwise.

I set out, pouring forth prayers for a country,
whose deliverance, but a few months before, appeared
to me so probable: how dreadful were the pangs: I

suffered on leaving it! It contained, besides the illustrious family so long the object of my enthusiasm, my children, the tombs of my ancestors, all the subjects of remembrance that give a charm to existence; those illusions which, after embellishing youth, are still reflected on the decline of life, like the rays of the setting sun glittering on the tops of trees.

After touching at Malta, I landed in Sicily, where my mind was haunted by the images of an unfortunate war, and by the shades of the brave men who had fallen by my side: alas! these sad feelings were, if not weakened, at least superseded, for a while, by an emotion of a different kind. I was now in the dominions of the illustrious Queen who, three years before, had received me so kindly, when I went to mourn the death of her exalted daughter; of that adored Empress, who had been my guardian angel, and who, to the unceasing patronage with which she honoured me during her life, had added proofs of a sincere friendship. I went to lay at the feet of her disconsolate mother, the colours of the regiment which bore the name of the Empress, and of which I was the colonel. Under the

impression of her deep sorrow, so truly participated by me, commenced the interest which this excellent Queen ever after took in my fate; an interest that constitutes my glory and my happiness, and which it shall be the study of my whole life to justify by my actions. The conversation turned upon the exalted qualities of the object of her grief. I told her of the high estimation in which she stood at Vienna; I painted to her her air of majesty, tempered with the most insinuating grace; her excellent conduct which gained her the hearts of all, and her firmness under the greatest misfortunes. When I spoke of the general grief which her death had caused, the reflection seemed to mitigate the excess of her sorrow.

This was at a former period: I was now again in Sicily, but with a broken heart; and I made one of the greatest sacrifices my reason had ever imposed upon me, in resolving not to throw myself at the feet of the Queen of Naples, and express in person my respect and ardent attachment for her, which will terminate only with my life. But now I had no consolation to offer her; no happy prospects to foresee; and all

that I had to say would but have added to her sufferings without avail. I wrote to her, and she honoured me with her kind wishes and regret; I received her letter at the moment of my departure: it expressed grief, but no despondency.

As the vessel sailed, I bade adieu to a land in which I left a princess of the blood of my sovereigns, whose fortitude and exalted qualities render her worthy of a happier lot, whose magnanimity is heightened by misfortune, and whose energy exceeds even the severity of her fate. There too, are deposited the remains of a beloved wife whom I lost three years ago: I had no tears left to bestow upon her memory; the misfortunes of my country had exhausted them all. My wife and country lost! Spaniards, I cried, you shall be my countrymen, my brothers: with you will I triumph or die.

I was on board the frigate *la Paz*, commanded by captain Lobo, a genuine Spaniard. On the passage, this officer had it in his power to take an unarmed ship; but he scorned to make a prize unattended with

danger, or to acquire an inglorious profit at the expense of the victims of the war. The ship belonged to a country which had lately been ceded by Austria to France.

In the middle of a fine night, by the mild light of the moon, we discovered the coast of Spain. With what sensations was I agitated when I saw that land so famed for heroic deeds, so desolated by repeated paroxysms of fury ! In vain did the calm of the night, the serenity of the sky, and the gentle motion of the waves, invite me to pleasing reveries ; my imagination dwelt upon the shore on which I was about to land, and to find traces of the most destructive and bloody war that had been known for ages ; I likewise anticipated those grand scenes now to be presented to my view by a nation roused, and armed to defend their religion, their sovereign and their laws.

Enthusiasm and anxiety were seen throughout the crew of the frigate The chaplain suddenly appeared upon deck, and all kneeling around him, he fervently preferred this prayer :

“ O God of battles ! stretch not thy arm in anger
“ over this land, where thy name is yet held sacred ;
“ where we are fighting to keep off irreligion from the
“ temples consecrated to thy worship, and usurpa-
“ tion from the throne of our lawful sovereigns.
“ Avert the arrows of death from ranks that combat
“ for religion and the king ; confound the devices of
“ impiety, and punish the crimes of tyranny ! O God !
“ preserve our King, Ferdinand the Seventh ! Let thy
“ gracious favour protect him in his captivity, and let
“ thy strength support him amidst the plots of the
“ wicked !” Tears burst from every eye, and a
solemn silence, for some minutes, succeeded this
prayer ; but it was soon broken by the national air,
the burden of which was an energetic imprecation
against the enemies of Spain. Such a moment mocks
the powers of description : the sails were swelled by a
gentle breeze, a gun was fired from time to time, and
the united voices of the mariners continued an in-
teresting concert. In this manner we approached the
shore, and anchored in the bay.

Next morning, we entered the harbour of Cadiz

through a forest of masts, and one of the finest sights that mortal eye can behold, was suddenly opened to our view : those innumerable ships which conveyed the produce of the two worlds to this city, threatened with all the horrors of a siege ; which were at once freighted with the commodities of commerce and the instruments of war, and while they poured out upon the wharfs and kayes merchandize and provisions, loaded them also with muskets, balls, bullets and regimentals ; the English and the Spanish fleets riding on the same waters, uniting their flags and ready to thunder on the common enemy : these grand objects formed a whole which afforded subjects of admiration to the eye, sublime ideas to the imagination, and lively emotions to the heart.

At that moment, the noble recollections which Spain is so calculated to awaken, rushed upon my mind, for I was about to mingle with that nation, which, though not more backward than the rest in the arts and sciences, was so little known to others, only because they had preserved, in the progress of civilization, their manners, customs, prejudices and outward appearance.

I reviewed in imagination the exploits of a people who, for nearly two centuries, had ceased to make a figure in the great drama of the world, as if, after their heroic actions, they had required a long repose to recruit their strength and acquire new energy ; who, having conquered almost all the Powers of Europe, one after another, saw their rulers give, at the same time, laws to the two worlds ; who, a few ages since, recovered their country from the Moors, and, in that grand struggle, gave an earnest of the prodigious efforts which they display in their present contest ; who, in short, saw the close of the empire of the Goths, and the brilliancy of the reign of Charles V, which almost equalled the gigantic aspect of the empire now rising before our eyes, without having subjected Europe to similar convulsions, or involved her in similar calamities.

My mind recalled those striking traits collected by history, composing a character completely distinct from that of every other nation ; a character in which nature seems fond of uniting contrasts ; where chivalry and religion, galantry and morals, a taste for distant enterprizes and the love of home, activity and repose

meet without clashing; a character, in short, eminently adapted to repel a foreign yoke, in spite of its being marked by that unsuspecting confidence, and even by that improvidence which seems favourable to the designs of an enemy.

My thoughts now turning to the highly favoured soil of the country, the greatest part of which prospers under the influence of a perpetual spring, it grieved me to think how different its present state was from that which nature seems to have intended for it. These images haunted and threw a gloom over my mind in spite of me; I saw the dead stretched upon flowers, putrefaction in the midst of perfumes, and bloody battles fought beneath orange trees, whose shattered stems fell with the victims of war.

Admitting still more dreadful ideas, and contemplating the frenzy with which both parties fight, their bloody retaliations, the ingenious barbarity of the oppressors and the correspondent rage of the oppressed, I saw with horror that even victory failed to satiate the fury of the combattants, and that death continued its

ravages, when the battle was over, upon the vanquished, the flying and the captured, upon those who submitted as well as upon those who still resisted.

On a sudden I heard the bells and my eyes were turned towards that grove of spires which towers over the houses of Cadiz. Ah ! cried I, almost all the establishments of piety are destroyed in other parts of Spain, orgies are celebrated in the asylums of virtue, obscene songs resound from those roofs where the most sacred silence reigned ; all, all has been profaned by a hostile and impious soldiery. The priest no longer finds a consecrated place for prayer ; he prays on ruins, he kneels in blood, he prostrates himself upon the slain. The fields have lost their freshness, the landscape its enchantment ; the murmuring streams are tinctured with blood, the soil is dyed with it. Pious virgins dedicated to God have been driven from their abodes ; caves and deep forests, where they might have deposited the images of their saints and sung their holy songs, have been explored by the enemy with a vigilance which

nothing escapes ; obliged to follow the armies which protect them, they find, in dressing the wounds of the soldiers, the last consolation they are permitted to enjoy, the only duty a ferocious enemy leaves them to perform.

The pious recluse has been driven from his cell by the din of arms ; he has been thrown back by the common danger, into that world which he had abjured : not to admire its pomps, not to share its enjoyments, but to expose his venerable head to the fire of the enemy, and to grasp with a feeble hand the fatal instruments of death. He seeks to avenge or to recover the altars which he cannot yet approach, and having been made a soldier from necessity, he becomes an avenger from religion

Pardon me, my Lord, for describing to you all these sensations ; and yet you would have felt them, and would have taken a pleasure in expressing them to a man who may say with Terence :—

“ Homo sum humane nihil a me alienum puto.”

Though I cannot here undertake, my Lord, to give you an exact account of the state of Spain at the time I arrived there, my opportunities being confined to Cadiz and its vicinity, yet what I observed in that city may serve to give an idea of the people in general, and of the spirit with which they are animated; for, containing the various departments of government, the courts of law, the generals of the armies, and, if I may so express myself, a fragment of the population of each province, Cadiz is, as it were, a focus in which the opinions and feelings of the nation are collected in a point,

I expected to see the tumult and agitation of a grand crisis, and particularly of a national insurrection; but I was mistaken: there was something austere in the appearance of all I saw. I remarked a sobriety in language, and a sedateness in action. There was no clamour, no abuse, no violence: when men met they saluted each other with a single sentence—pithy, but of awful import. Not unlike what we have heard of those pious fathers who die daily, as they dig daily their own graves, and who, breaking the perpe-

tual silence imposed upon them, reciprocate, when they meet, the tremendous salutation :—“ Brother ! “ think of death.”

Deep must that hatred be which is silent, because it defies expression, which does not break forth in the absence of its object, nor explode but in the last necessity. “ Feel this heart,” said a Spaniard of high birth to me ; “ it beats no longer for love, for “ esteem, for filial piety, for paternal fondness ; it “ has no room but for hatred ; hatred dilates and “ agitates it, swells every pulsation, and bursts through “ every pore.”

I found but one mode of thinking, that of resistance ; but one wish that of revenge ; the supposition of treachery is out of the question ; hesitation, alone is a crime; indecision is death. You are not asked : “ Are you for religion, for the king, for “ the country ?” No, you are told : “ Here are arms, “ you must fight; here are engines, you must use them “ for the common defence.” To such a pitch is the national animosity enflamed, that a Spaniard never

thinks any person living under the same roof, or within the same walls, can possibly wish well to his enemies. Not to be anxious for their destruction, not to assist in it, is the only crime he conceives possible—the only one he thinks of punishing. The lawgiver of Athens did not believe the possibility of parricide.

No sooner did I put my foot on shore among that great people than I perceived this—I was struck with it on the first glance I took of the collected population of Cadiz, who consider themselves as the last bulwark of Spain, and who concentrate and preserve all the feelings and all the energy which in other parts of the peninsula, are stifled by the presence of the enemy.

Here courage is not depressed by sorrow; here hatred leads not to rashness. They grieve at a defeat; they groan over enormities, but think of vengeance. I announced myself as a German, an Hungarian, and was asked no questions as to my

opinions: my being at Cadiz, and no Frenchman, was enough.

The day after my arrival, I was invited to a funeral service for an officer of rank, killed near Seville. Similar testimonies of respect are daily paid to the memory of the brave by their relatives in almost all the churches of Cadiz.

I am proud, my Lord, to own that my attachment to the religion of my fathers is not limited to a barren profession of faith, but that I delight in supporting its principles by the practice of its ceremonies; I readily, therefore, went to pray for the soul of a soldier who had died on the field of honour. The chapel in which the priest officiated was situated in the most retired spot of the church, the family and some friends of the deceased were assembled in a solemn attitude around a bier, on which were painted the officer's arms.

At sight of these holy ceremonies, this mournful

preparation, which brought to my recollection that the year before, in my own beloved country, in the midst of my comrades and in the presence of my sovereigns, I had attended a solemn service for my fellow soldiers who had died in arms defending their country, I felt a dreadful pang, and the most bitter recollections rushed into my mind.

Prayer is the necessity of feeling hearts—the consolation of the unhappy. I prayed fervently. “ Oh ! “ my God, am I then come to encounter the same “ griefs in a land where I already witness a part of “ the calamities which ruined my country ? Am I “ destined to see this nation for which I am come “ to fight, fall like my own ? I dare to look up to “ Thee with hope that the last asylum of loyalty will “ be the scene of its triumph ; and oh ! may those “ who, confiding in Thy providence, have never “ despained of Thy justice, be made its avenging “ instruments ! ”

An heart-felt sadness was visible in every countenance ; their looks were severe and solemn, till a

degree of tenderness was awakened on perceiving the share I took in their sorrow; they then gave, to sympathy with my emotion, the tears they had denied to their own grief.

The funeral knell, the solemn hymns, the requiem of the dead had never struck me so forcibly before.

At the conclusion of the prayers, while the last mournful sounds were dying away, the tapers extinguished, and a single lamp, suspended in the middle of the chapel, was casting a feeble light, I remained on my knees, praying with the utmost fervour. As I raised my eyes I was suddenly struck with a kind of apparition: a woman of middling stature but elegant form, in deep mourning, was standing before me: I gazed at her with surprise and admiration; her looks were those of melancholy. She turned slowly away, and I followed her to the door of the church.

How different, my Lord, was this meeting from some arranged even in these sacred places by the ef-

frontery of women lost to modesty, seconded by the weakness of men devoid of principle ! My grief and my devotion had interested Dona Maria de ——: and the sympathy of those feelings produced a pure attachment.

When I met her again, a few days after, she addressed me thus :—“ Baron, are you not now become a Spaniard, anxious for our success, and will you not be proud and happy to contribute to it ? I solicit the honour of dressing the first wound you shall receive in our cause. I will not do you the injustice to think it necessary to apologize for the manner in which we became acquainted ; our dangers and our situation banish all ceremony, and dispense with those formalities which, in peaceful times and in ordinary circumstances are safeguards to morals ; though likewise, at times, a veil for corruption. We, in some sort, neglect the distinctions of age, sex, and rank : the union of sentiments and efforts, and the defence of the same interests cement the various periods of life and the different classes of society. Our misfortunes, our dangers,

“ and our duties are the same, and one fate awaits
“ us. Remember that I first saw you at the side of a
“ bier, in a chapel hung with black. Ah ! it is not
“ in such a place that the smiling ideas of love can
“ occupy the imagination ; they are not inspired by
“ the sight of tombs, nor excited by the dirge of
“ death : neither is it amidst the terrible images
“ which surround us on all sides, the noise of the
“ thunder that strikes our countrymen, and menaces
“ our abodes, that the thought of pleasure—a thought
“ which would be sacrilegious amidst so many cala-
“ mities, can find room in Spanish bosoms.
“ Baron,” continued she, with a convulsive shake of
the hand, “ at present you shall fight for us, it will
“ be glory to you : the time may come when we
“ shall be twining wreaths of roses, listening to feel-
“ ings different from those which gave rise to our
“ friendship, and breathing the strains of love to
“ the soft accompaniment of our national guitar
“ Yes, on some future day—if our hearts are not
“ frozen in death, or our bodies mangled and crushed
“ in the ruins of our walls.”

Such have I found to be the sentiments of all the Spanish ladies, and they express them with similar energy. They are become Spartans and Carthaginians ; the retreats of pleasure wear the aspect of austerity ; the ornaments and paintings remain the same, but the divinity of the temple no longer illumines it with the fire of his countenance, no longer embellishes it with his smile.

I was, as it were, haunted by a dream at once afflicting and consolatory amidst images so new to me, and at the appearance of a population doomed in a few days to experience all the horrors of war, and who, though fully aware of the danger seemed not to dread it. I was myself sensible of the whole extent of it, yet would hardly believe it. I conceived from the proclamations, and from letters coming from the army, that the enemy had taken Seville, was advancing rapidly towards the isle of Leon, and would be soon at the gates of Cadiz. These tidings, probably exaggerated, but which did not at the time appear to be so, nothing being known of the Duc d'Albuquerque's admirable march, made me very uneasy for the safety

of Cadiz. But, on the other hand, when I contemplated the people, I could not imagine that I was in a threatened town, and perhaps at the eve of the final conflict of that war in which loyalty was struggling against usurpation, and the heroism of virtue against the frenzy of robbery. I every where heard the language of confidence, every where saw the manifestation of courage and preparations for resistance without the slightest appearance of tumult. "If they "come," said the Spaniards, "we will fight them; "if they enter here, they shall find only ruins and "dead bodies, for the survivors will go elsewhere and "fight." The idea of being beaten entered no one's head; they might be obliged to abandon Cadiz, but the possibility of being subjugated was out of the question.

It is when a conviction of the national strength thus pervades every breast, when every individual satisfied that he makes an integral part of that strength, believes it residing in himself, and mingled with his being, that we may foresee the greatest exploits and prodigies, which, exalting man above himself, are

treated by posterity with incredulity, because they do not comprehend the power of the sentiment that produced them.

That sentiment I have myself seen, and have estimated the power of it in the heart of a menaced city. All feeling for self was at an end ; desire, will, effort were one and entire ; the whole population was but one mass having one uniform motion, directed by a single impulse, and acting rapidly, simply, and at once.

As soon as the danger was made known, every one was eager to work upon the fortifications. With what admiration did I contemplate all ages and conditions mingling in one common labour !

Nor was the lustre of this grand scene, my Lord, diminished by any appearances of disorder or dissipation. The gravity of devotion gave to every countenance something sedate and solemn : addresses to God, and prayers for the King were in every mouth. I beheld the beautiful pictures of Tasso, when he

describes the Christians headed by their prelates working on the walls of the holy city, realized before me. Some engineers directed the labours of all the groups, which were partly composed of venerable priests, and even of very young children.

A boy of ten years of age once fell at my feet through fatigue; I took him up in my arms, and carried him some distance off, where, making him swallow the juice of an orange, I soon had the pleasure of seeing him open his eyes. The first thing he did was to call his brother Raphael, who he told me was younger than himself, and for whom he begged an orange. "Oh! if any thing should happen to "him," cried he, "Mother will never let us come "together any more to work; but they can't hinder "me; Mother can't hinder me; for when she takes "me in her arms and cries with us, she often says to "me:—You shall revenge your father, my boy." On this, I observed that the child was dressed in mourning. "My little fellow," said I, "you have "no father, then?" "No," answered he, casting on me, at the same time, one of those looks to which the

instinct of nature, still more than feeling, attached something so affecting, that I could not help saying : “ Well, I will be your father, and Raphael’s too !” Oh, my children ! At that moment I thought of you, and heightened the sweetness of the recollection by the inexpressible pleasure I felt, as I pressed the tender object of my adoption to my heart ! Mother of my children ! whom I lost while you were adorned with all the graces of your sex, whilst I was far from suspecting that death was so soon to stop the vibration of that heart which beat only for me, to extinguish those looks where tenderness seemed inexhaustible. Oh, my wife ! I now think that you looked down from heaven and approved the emotion of my heart at that moment : I believe that in your prayers to the Most High, you have since united the names of the two orphans to whom I have promised to be a father, with those of your husband and your children !—I carried the little beings in whom I was so interested, to their mother, and told her of my determination. She thanked me by her looks, and with a smile, on which was painted all the weight of her grief, seemed

to press her children to her bosom more tenderly from their having found a protector.

Alas ! my Lord, while I was thus enjoying the delightful sympathies of nature, and indulging them with all the ardour of a susceptible heart, what bitterness succeeded my enjoyment ! I reproached myself for yielding to it ; I conceived I had degenerated from those great sentiments which animate the Spaniards, and had mixed effeminate feelings with the enthusiasm with which their cause had enflamed me. What ! said I, is it proper to shed womanish tears, or feast upon the recollections of love in a crisis that is to determine the fate of nations ? Is it right to sigh where we ought to fight, and weep when we should hate ? During the existence of a scourge which swallows up cities and inundates the land, is it becoming to forget the horror of the general lot, to follow with an anxious eye, a cradle floating on the waters, and to pity the child asleep in it, who is gently gliding from sleep to death ?

Not such are the Spaniards ; their personal feel-

ings are absorbed in the immensity of the general interest; I saw none deplored their private losses, or having in their fears and hopes any other object than their country. I saw on the approach of the danger, which threatened Cadiz, the richest individuals tear themselves from domestic enjoyments, from their homes, where all the refinements of luxury were assembled, to undertake the most laborious and continual service as volunteers. Several of the most opulent merchants of Cadiz were commanded by their own clerks, without any relaxation of discipline, which it might be supposed the latter would think themselves obliged to allow in deference to their masters. I observed the strictest military subordination established amongst them, I observed in them only officers and soldiers; all the shades of society produced by the different conditions of life were entirely obliterated, and I never beheld a more martial appearance or a more military organization in any national guards, than I found in the admirable battalion of the Cadiz Volunteers.

I mixed every where, in the labours of the multi-

tude in the exercises of the Volunteers, in the movements of the troops of the line. I was proud of making a common cause with that great nation, and of being admitted into those groups, of which some were yet training, some were organized, that were forming for the purpose of uniting in the defence of one of the principal bulwarks of Spain. I had frequently occasion to converse with men who had the greatest influence on public affairs and the conduct of the war. Among those who, with an ardent zeal for the cause of the country, possessed the greatest means of serving it, I distinguished . . . *. It is to him I partly owe the knowledge I have of the great character of the Spaniards, and my persuasion that they will never wear the yoke of their enemy.

Fain would I, my Lord, give you here a just and full account of those conversations whence I drew exalted ideas and noble hopes; a sketch, at least, I

* The respect I owe to a man eminent for genius and talents prevents me from publishing his name without his consent.

may attempt. "The determination to take us by surprise," said he, "betrayed a complete ignorance of our character. The Spanish pride, which is become proverbial, is not a passion rendered ridiculous by exaggeration, and impotent by blindness; on the contrary, it elevates and braces the mind against all that force or artifice may exert for the overthrow of our independence. The supposed influence of our government, which some are pleased to call despotic, and of our religion, said to be a degrading superstition, on our national character, is likewise a great mistake. Our kings have never sought to debase the nation in order to exercise their power over it; they have, on the contrary, always kept up those sentiments of honour and pride which separated it from the other European nations, preventing it from confounding itself with them, from participating their errors; and from submitting to their yoke. With respect to religion, very little must they know of Catholicism, who pretend that it has injured the unfolding of our character, or diminished the energy of our means. Accustomed, for so many ages, to defend our faith,

and having secured its triumph against the contagion which the Moors, those ancient conquerors of our territory, strove to introduce into it; the more we have done to preserve it, the more are we attached to it, and to all that relates to it: our rites, ceremonies, and sacred institutions are so connected with the records of our glory, that the pretended fanaticism with which we are charged, far from degrading us into brutes, cannot but exalt us."

" We are a nation without reproach : the love of the sciences, of letters, and a taste for the arts, which has been spreading among us for the two last centuries, have, it is true, excited us to the acquisition of such a degree of knowledge as not to leave us too far behind in European civilization ; but they have not communicated to us that impulse towards *perfectibility* which only produces error, or those doctrines which dazzle instead of enlightening, or, in fine, that inordinate desire of enjoyments which enervate nations instead of communicating to them a salutary energy."

" It has been said of us, by a modern writer,

who has thoroughly studied our character, and who is the less to be suspected in what he has published in our favour, as he wrote under the influence of the power by whom we are now attacked : “ That naturally cool on common occasions, we are roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, when pride, resentment, or any of the passions that form part of our character are awakened by outrage or opposition. This, says he, is the cause why the gravest, coolest, and apparently the most indolent nation in Europe, becomes one of the most violent, when some peculiar circumstance rouses it from its habitual calm, and places it under the empire of its imagination. The most formidable animals are not those that are the most agitated. Observe the lion: his countenance as well as his walk is sedate; he does not move without an object, he does not roar idly: molest not his repose, he loves silence and peace; provoke him, he shakes his mane, his eyes dart fire, he growls, and the king of the beasts stands confess.”

“ Is it not astonishing, continued M. — that

a people, amongst whom we have been painted in such strong and true colours, should have consented to carry on against us the most destructive and inveterate war ever waged by one nation against another ? But do aggressors ever consult justice in the dreadful shocks which, like the grand convulsions of nature, shake the world and dash large masses against one another, and covering the land with their immense ruins? Alas ! human nature carries in itself the principle of its own destruction. Man has not a greater enemy than man. The sentiments which distinguish him, and place him at the head of nature serve but to render his dreadful conflicts more bloody. The tiger of the desert has but his instinct ; he darts upon the prey he would devour, but nothing adds to his thirst for blood ; he practises no refined cruelty, and seldom attacks his own species. But man---oh man ! he makes use of his knowledge to injure his fellow creatures, and his ingenuity but serves to inspire him with the greatest inveteracy against them.

“ We provoked not this war, God knows we provoked it not—yet, how have we been assassinated

mutilated ! our houses and churches burnt, our towns and villages destroyed ! I have seen the infant that was smiling with delight at the shining of the sword over his head, inhumanly slaughtered, while the smile was yet upon his lips. I have heard the shrieks of mothers who were struggling with the murderers for their tender babes. Oh ! nothing can equal those shrieks ; nature has invested them with all that inspires horror and pity, tenderness and dread. But to these the brutal soldiery of the tyrant were insensible ; through the bodies of the children their swords were driven into the bosoms of the distracted mothers. Let men fall by the weapons of their enemies ; it is the lot of war : the death of the brave in the heat of battle is less deplorable, for it is attended with glory and preceded by action ; and besides, it often happens that strength and valour take their revenge at the very moment they are overcome : but to see the ornament and the hope of society sacrificed at once, to see the bodies of women and children lying dead amidst the ruins of war, unburied and a prey to vultures ! Oh !——— it is a sight that agonizes the heart !

“ Yet the infamous pretenders to philanthropy, who have ruined the world by enervating character, exclaim against our vengeance, inveteracy, and rage ! But we should deserve the shameful fetters with which our enemy would load us, and for ever merit the contempt of mankind, if all these outrages had failed to rouse our passions to a degree of frenzy ; or if our hearts were open to any feeling, any desire, of which hatred was not the principle and vengeance the object. Such a state, no doubt, is painful : hatred, like never-ceasing torture, is the habitual state of the demon of darkness ; but when, in return for our long forbearance and hospitality, we are made to suffer the most horrible outrages, to hate becomes our duty, and the less we deserve them the more terrible should be our retaliation.

“ And after we shall have fulfilled this duty, imposed by religion and by honour, alas ! will the land, which we shall have recovered by so many sacrifices, retain its former charms, to us who shall have witnessed how many murders have stained it ? How shall we be able to enjoy the enchanting views of the coun-

try; and the pleasures of our rural retreats, when we recollect the scenes of desolation of which our fields have been the theatre ? The victims of this dreadful war will be for ever before our eyes : in the dew drops we shall fancy their tears ; in the zephyrs, that kiss the flowers, we shall hear their sighs, and the winds which shake the trees will recall their groans : their mournful voices will be heard murmuring in the depths of the forests, their bleeding shades will dart from the bosoms of the odoriferous groves, and sometimes, in the dead of night, will accompany us in our lonely walks, or seat themselves by us on the bed to which we shall retire in search of rest.

“ Think not that I here yield myself to those illusions which the imagination delights to dwell upon when wearied out with a thousand lamentable images, a thousand afflicting recollections. At my age we are no longer under its capricious empire, we no longer look through its deceitful prism, we judge of things as they are. But grief is open to superstitions, which are common to every age, and a belief of apparitions ever succeeds those dreadful struggles in which nations

engage with nations. Though the soul preserves her energy amidst those convulsions, she blindly adopts whatever nourishes her sorrow and irritates her passions, and, at the return of tranquillity, she pursues the images which recall those fearful times as if suffering had become a habit and agitation were necessary to her."

Adverting then to other subjects, this worthy Spaniard was very solicitous to prove that his countrymen were not the unsociable and barbarous beings which they had been represented to be by travellers who had never studied their character and who little knew them.

" We are represented," said he to me at times, " with a want of taste for the arts; and travellers, viewing the ruins of the magnificent edifices built by the Arabs and Moors, charge us with following the example of the Turks, who have suffered the monuments of ancient Greece to decay, and who, in the meanest buildings, use fragments of statues and capitals of columns on which the chissel of the greatest sculptors

of antiquity had been employed. I allow that efforts similar to those produced by the barbarous ignorance of the Turks, have been partly produced in our country by the national pride. The magnificent palaces of the Alhambra and Generalif were not bequeathed to our care and admiration by the genius of our ancestors. They are the galling monuments of our ancient slavery, and though we do not accelerate the action of time which is slowly undermining them, we take no pains to secure them against it.

“ No doubt, the traveller and even the Spaniard, friends to the Arts, would be delighted to find in all their splendor, in the heart of the kingdom of Grenada, those palaces of which the description ressembles the fictions of the eastern tales, as that of the happy land where they are situated, exceeds all that the imagination can conceive most enchanting. No doubt they would delight to walk beneath those marble arches which sparkle with gold and azure, when the air was impregnated with the sweetest perfumes and refreshed by limpid streams that murmured on every side

“ But our nation has not deigned to preserve for the pleasure of a few virtuosos those monuments of the magnificence of the voluptuous kings of Grenada ; and the very palace which was built by the order of Charles V, amidst the magnificent remains of the Arabic architecture, is now as much a desert as the hall in which the Abencerrages perished.

“ I like this wild disdain : it was a surer preservation of our national character than the lofty mountains which nature seems to have placed as immense barriers between us and the rest of Europe.

“ This separation has been our protection : the insult offered to our honour, our loyalty, our good faith, was scarcely accomplished, when the whole nation rose at once. Never did the anger of a people present so awful a sight, or display itself with such unanimity. There was nothing concerted in the explosion ; the remotest parts of Spain, and the most opposite points, experienced at the same time a commotion which spread itself with even greater celerity than the electric fluid, and without communicating,

like that, by successive shocks. The agitation and insurrection were general, and took place every where at once. That moment immortalizes our nation : thus to feel outrage is to revenge it.

“ We shall not be subjugated ; no, never shall we submit to a yoke which it has been attempted to impose upon us in a manner most shocking to a nation not corrupted. But if the enemy should possess himself of our territory, if he should be able to boast of acquiring ruins and reigning over dead bodies, if the last Spaniard should fall disputing the last spot of earth on which he stood, then shall our vengeance be bequeathed to other nations, who, glowing with admiration of our unparalleled efforts and unanimous resistance, shall repair to this hallowed land, to contend for it with our murderers, here make their way by imitating our virtues, here wet their courage, here revive their energy and rouse our bones, by sacrificing on the earth that covers them, the barbarians who shall have butchered us. It will not be in the power of those who have so unjustly attacked and so cruelly treated us, to rob our name of the splendid and immortal lustre with which

it will shine to the end of time. The first effect of our anger was to overthrow, with the rapidity of lightning, the savage hordes who conceived that they might massacre us with impunity, or subjugate us without resistance. Since the attainment of that grand success by a single movement of an indignant nation, we have sustained the weight of the most formidable and most numerous armies of Europe, without betraying the slightest despondency : this energy, this magnanimity are already inscribed on the immortal tablets of history, where the ferocity of our foes are at the same time painted in traits of fire.

“ Then were all the elements of arming homogeneous ; the first officer who happened to be present, where a meeting was formed, took the command of it ; his troop encreased like those prodigious whirlwinds which, formed by contending tempests, envelope in their immense bodies all that they meet with in their impetuous course. No jealousy, no rivalry was then known among the leaders ; the sentiment which animated every heart was as pure as the motive which armed every hand. Success every where crowned our

efforts, and the astonished Continent saw its conquerors conquered, chased, made prisoners by unorganized masses.

“ Oh ! how rapid were those moments of glory and intoxication ; and what fatigue, and labour, and suffering have followed the brilliant presages they held out to us !

“ The attempt to regulate that movement relaxed it ; by resolving to give more experienced leaders to that multitude, wound up to a pitch of frenzy by passions the most noble, but at the same time the most ardent, a direction was sometimes communicated to it not analogous to its impulse. One of the distinguishing characters of our just war is, that our armies have almost always been dispersed, whereas the wandering bands which preceded their organization, or which appeared after their defeats, at first cleared our country of the enemy, and have since goaded, harassed, and destroyed them more than all the operations of our generals and their bloody, but unavailing battles.

" In the grand explosions produced by the rising of a whole nation, nothing wears a determined aspect and nothing prospers, while there wants an affinity between the commotion and the character of the leaders who direct it. Their boldness should keep pace with its irritation, and their activity with its violence ; and in their tactics, originating with circumstances, they should know how to take advantage of the immense force at their disposal, to oppose numbers to discipline, and to crush organized bodies under the weight of masses.

" The Juntas were every where animated with the best intentions, but unacquainted with the nature of the commotion which they attempted to direct, they destroyed the general spring of action, by seeking rather to provide for the defence of the parts of the country under their administration, than to concert a grand plan of attack and resistance; and, in general, without considering whether the provisions, ammunitions and stores which they could dispose of, were not more necessary at other points, they paid more attention to their own armies, than to the wants of those which were immediately

exposed to the shock of the enemy. Notwithstanding the services which these Juntas have done in their respective jurisdictions, it is to their divided action, to the incoherence, and sometimes to the opposition of their measures, that the tardiness of our civil and military organization ought to be attributed.

" Perhaps, if left to itself, our nation would have found in its energy, means sufficient to avert all its dangers, and in its wisdom, modes of counteracting the factions who should have attempted to mislead its ardour, and to inspire it with pretensions contrary to the end for which it had taken up arms; perhaps from those assemblies formed to revenge the king and save the country, from the midst of those battalions organized with an almost miraculous rapidity, there would have arisen men equally capable of directing in the cabinet, and leading in the field.... But we must suppose that the very character assumed by our just rising, was incompatible with the enjoyment of so dangerous an independance. What could be more affecting, and at the same time more extraordinary than that voluntary submission of a people in commotion, to the bo-

dies who held their authority from the king, than that unalterable attachment to Ferdinand VII, than that affection, that enthusiasm inspired by his name, than that love which does not require the presence of the sovereign who is the object of it to support its ardour, nor the hope of seeing him again to maintain its constancy !

“ The rights of that prince were never more respected nor better defended than from the moment when it might be imagined that they became doubtful. Through a generosity which is one of the most brilliant traits of our national character, we forgot all our grievances to think only of our duties, we put off all reforms to support our monarchy on its foundations, and seeing the young sovereign, whom our suffrages had called to the throne, unworthily treated, we displayed the more fidelity the greater the rigour of his fate.

“ You observe, that the doctrines which have infested the Continent, have not found their way among us ; the impious desire of *regeneration* has not depra-

ved the noble sentiments which have always animated us. Such a grand example of loyalty must shine in the present epoch, like those streaming lights of the north which sometimes banish darkness from the poles.

“ The Spaniards thought only of their king betrayed, their country threatened, their confidence deceived, and without bringing forward dangerous pretensions, without recollecting abuses by which they had suffered, and without annexing any condition to their devotion, they fought for their ancient government and for their legitimate sovereign.

“ In spite of the defects of the system which was suddenly established to regulate our exertions, in spite of the errors of the Juntas, the rivalry of our generals, and the separate state in which our different armies have acted in consequence of the independance of their respective leaders, we have not been subjugated, and there are at present more soldiers among us, fighting in the cause of loyalty and honour, than at the time when our armies were most numerous

“ We have seen that truly terrific man who overthrows every thing in his impetuous course, appear himself upon our land, threatening to disperse our armies like dust. . . . And if, to a certain degree, he has realised his threat ; if his veteran bands have dispersed an army which was neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently disciplined to sustain so great a shock, at least his appearance has not left among us that profound terror which it spread in other countries ; and, in spite of the blow struck by his formidable arm, we have raised our heads to give the lie to his infamous prediction, and never were we so united as since he imagined he had crushed us.

“ Nations are the first power of the creation, and the blindness of him who pretends to subjugate them, when once up in arms, may be compared to the madness of Xerxes, who flogged the raging waves for dispersing his fleet.

“ What an error was it in that man, to whom such profound views and an unerring penetration were attributed, to rouse irrevocably a nation that appeared

amidst the troubles of Europe, to desire tranquillity in preference to glory ! But, what do I say ? Are not our agitations preferable to that apathy, and is it not better to be sensible of life, even in pain, than to lose it by the imperceptible action of gangrene and corruption ? Had it not been for those outrages, we should have continued in a situation which, in the end, would have entirely enervated our character, and which, after inducing us to forget the dear title of country and our beloved institutions, would have led us to accept, without resistance or consideration, any master that might have been imposed upon us by treachery or baseness

“ We should have been free this day, if the scattering of the sovereign power had not counteracted the general action of our strength. We thought to concentrate the government by confiding it to a Supreme Junta : unfortunate measure, the disasters of which will with difficulty be repaired, in spite of the activity and ardour of the men who have succeeded an administration that, at the moment of its fall, was not yet constituted ! That Junta, to whom such great interests

were confided, knew not either to yield to public opinion when it was proper to follow its powerful impulse, or to resist it when resistance might be useful to the state: occupied with intestine intrigues and partial arrangements, they were jealous of their power before they had established it, and of their prerogatives before they had settled them.—They were obstinate instead of being vigourous, and disorderly instead of being active; in short, they blasted the credit which they could not obtain, and the glory which they could not share.

“ As incapable of administering the finances, as of leading the armies, they wasted, without accounting for, the immense tributes remitted by our fellow-subjects of the two Americas, to be employed in the defence of the country.

“ Those contributions of loyalty, honour and brotherly feelings, ought to have been sacred; the employment of them was decided by our necessities, and by the intention of those from whom we received them; but by no consideration was the avidity or prodigality of the Junta restrained, and we ask one

another with as much astonishment as grief, what is become of those treasures which seemed sufficient to support our armies for a length of time?

" And what was their conduct towards our magnanimous allies, the English? They ought to have known that after so many sacrifices and efforts in our favour, England had a right to expect for her troops the most cordial reception and the most complete cooperation; that their safety required guarantees, and that preparations were necessary for their doing well; that it was necessary between the two nations to dispel those light clouds which had been raised in the last campaign by the reserve of the one and the pride of the other; and to dissipate those divisions which spring from political and religious prejudices: it was in so truly patriotic a work that the wisdom of their views should have been displayed, but this duty dictated equally by gratitude and policy never once entered into their thoughts.

" What impediments, delays and resistance did they oppose to the great anxiety, the prudent counsels,

and the repeated entreaties of that great statesman and illustrious ambassador, whom England sent to us as a proof of her esteem, and a pledge of her ardour in our cause!

" With a genious as extensive as the distant countries he had governed, he at once comprehended our dangers and conceived the means of averting them. He discovered the defects of our administration and at the same time pointed out the remedies to be applied to them. The government would not employ his foresight for the safety of the country, and in spite of his repeatedly urging his advice, it was rejected with still more obstinacy than he had constancy in pressing it.

" Yet every thing must have proved that the measures he proposed, sprung from the attachment which an exalted mind could not but feel for our cause, and that their object was to render our government more vigorous, and our resistance more active. He spoke in the name of a sovereign who felt, with all the indignation of a Spanish heart, the outrage com-

mitted upon our Royal Family, and of a nation who, ever since we have been engaged in the glorious struggle we maintain for our independence, seem to have confounded their interests, their wishes, their very existence with ours: to whom our victories are subjects of general rejoicing, and our defeats public calamities; who enjoy our glory and sympathize in our sufferings; in short, who, surpassing in ardour, if that be possible, the eagerness with which their ministers offered us a generous and efficacious support, have, in lavishing their blood and treasure for us, only regretted that they were not able to give us greater proofs of their zeal and of their devotion.

“ If, in some parts of Spain, there appear prejudices against these heroic auxiliaries, it is not that our gratitude for their efforts and sacrifices can ever be doubtful, or that it will not one day be manifested in unanimous transports; but the spirit of a nation, which, like this, has had little communication with others, is at first tinctured with some prejudices, some repugnances which time and familiarity alone can dissipate.”

pate; and had the Junta employed their influence to that point, the two nations would, ere now, have been as much united by brotherly ties, as they have been for two years past by their enthusiasm in the same cause."

Speaking of George III, M exclaimed with warmth: " What a Monarch is he who, among so many kings that had shut their eyes to the future, and neglected the lessons of the past and the awful counsels of the present, has preserved legitimate rights pure and respected, as in their last sanctuary ; who, after fighting for them, shelters them ; and to whom heaven, no doubt, grants so long a reign that he may one day see them completely re-established ! What noble examples of courage and of generosity distinguish the reign of that Nestor of monarchs who, rising amidst the ruins of Europe, like an old and reverend oak, is seen offering his guardian shade to nations and to kings ! In what part of the world have the oppressed implored his aid in vain, or rather where has he not voluntarily offered it when the people have armed in a just cause ?

" Oh ! great king !" cried M . . . with enthusiasm, " who have in the highest degree displayed the qualities of a Sovereign, uniting mildness with strength, and generosity with power, receive the homage of a heart as susceptible of gratitude as yours of magnanimity ! Ah ! there can be no doubt that the generous support which we have received from you, will enable us to revenge our sovereign and recover our rights ; there can be no doubt that you will one day hear that this nation, for whose sufferings you have felt so keenly, and whose exploits have perhaps excited your admiration, have returned to their shattered towns, have regained their ravaged fields, and that, after securing their independence, they are occupying themselves in repairing the terrible disasters of war . . . Then, finding in the prospect of our happiness and glory all the recompense your exalted mind desires, then will you see the evening of your days shine with all the lustre that you will have contributed to restore to us ; then will the banks of the Ebro, as well as those of the Oronoko and of the Mississipi, resound with thanksgivings for your benefits, and the national song, which in England breaths love and loyalty, that affecting

prayer of *God save the King*, become as dear, as touching, to the Spaniards of the two Worlds as to English hearts !”

Partaking unreservedly the enthusiasm of the distinguished character who thus expressed to me, with a warmth that seemed to make him young again, such patriotic and exalted sentiments, I, notwithstanding, ventured to make some observations to him on the portrait he had drawn of the Junta, and I mentioned several persons who had been members of it, whom the public opinion as well as the discernment of the worthy, had not confounded with the authors of the measures by which that body had lost the confidence of the nation. He replied : “ I spoke of the Junta as a government; but God forbid I should apply the opinion I have given to all the members !”

On the flight and dispersion of the Supreme Junta being known, another Junta was formed at Cádiz. From the spirit which animated this body, hastily organized and composed of the first known persons who, impelled by their zeal, became candidates for the ho-

nour of taking the post of vigilance and danger, we may judge of the sentiments of all the inhabitants of Cadiz, of their unalterable fidelity, of their invincible courage, and exalted constancy. In spite of the embarrassments into which this Junta was thrown by the approach of the enemy; in spite of the fatigue which they were obliged to undergo in providing at first for the defence of the town, and finding necessaries for the army which the Duke d'Albuquerque had, by the happiest movement and most skilful combination, brought to their relief; in spite of such a variety of details, they neglected none of their duties: their activity and zeal were equal to their labours, and anticipated the dangers that threatened the town.

A flag of truce arrives and brings a letter from Joseph, in which, inviting Cadiz to surrender, he holds out those promises that have but too frequently blinded and seduced the inhabitants of besieged places who have no other resource left than what is to be found in their courage, and even in their despair. The Junta reply to this letter: "That the town of Cadiz, faithful to the principles which it has sworn to

defend, acknowledges no other king than Ferdinand VII." The next day the enemy sends another dispatch, and the Junta orders it to be burnt publicly, by the hands of the hangman.

This measure was no vain bravado ; it was called for by the indignation felt by all the inhabitants of Cadiz, on learning that the enemy had reckoned on their submission and had dared to attach a reward to it. Nothing less than this brilliant act of contempt could have overcome the horror which his offers had raised, and establish the certainty that they would always be rejected.

The English troops were arrived at Cadiz, and conjointly with the Spaniards did the duty of the fortress. I frequently went at the break of day, to visit the advanced posts, and I had a peculiar pleasure in viewing a regiment of Scotch Highlanders. The stature, bold countenances and national uniform of the men, showed me the descendants of the heroes whom Ossian had sung, and brought to my mind the accounts, half fabulous, half historical, of ancient Caledonia. One

cloudy, chilly morning, having gone to a spot where they kept guard, I observed some of their centinels without their cloaks, and perceived that they had lent them to the Spaniards. Surprised and affected, I cast an earnest look on one of the brave Scots, who seemed to understand it: "General," said he to me, "we were not cold, and they had no cloaks."

What an affecting combination of sentiment and simplicity! Happy presage of the harmony which will reign between the English and Spanish nations, and of the mutual assistance which their soldiers will give to one another, in the battles they are called to fight by the most sacred of causes!

Another day when several officers of the staff had advanced with the Duke d'Albuquerque, to reconnoitre the positions of the enemy, I mounted my horse and rode up to the Duke, who was giving some orders. Seeing that he was very much exposed, I said to him: "General, pray go from this place, unless you mean to be killed." I had scarcely spoken the words, when a spent ball grazed his cheek, and lodged in the

collar of his coat. He took it out, and presenting it to me, said with admirable coolness : " General, receive this as the gift of a Spaniard who esteems you. But take care of yourself, for, with your hussar uniform and your orders, you are much more exposed than I am," I need not tell you, my Lord, that I knew how to value this present of a fellow soldier, and to admire that chivalrous character, which one no longer meets with but in romances and in Spain.

I have now, my Lord, need, not of your indulgence, but of the knowledge you have of the various incidents in the life of man, and of the influence which his passions, his recollections, his religion, and, above all his misfortunes, exercise over his imagination to gain from you an attentive, let me say solemn perusal of the particulars of the extraordinary event I am about to relate. I feel that it would perhaps be better that I did not give it a place here ; but it struck me so forcibly, and shows, in a peculiar manner, the Spanish character in a point of view so novel to those who have not thoroughly studied it, and so interesting to those who do know it, that I thought it incumbent

upon me to insert it in a letter, intended to show your Lordship what noble virtues, what exalted sentiments are congenial to that nation so little understood, and which would have been more respected had it been more known.

I should not have mentioned this striking occurrence to your Lordship, and I should have distrusted the impression it has left upon myself, if men without prejudices, to whom I have related it, had not thought it extraordinary, but not improbable, affecting but not exaggerated.

I one day accompanied some Spanish ladies on a party, I will not say of pleasure, but amusement, on board a man of war: the captain, on sending us ashore in his barge, had had the gallantry to place a band of musicians in the boat to enliven us on our way. We were singing the national air.—Alas ! could one sing any thing but the hymn of the holy crusade in which the nation was engaged ! The sky was overcast, the sea was ruffled, and as we were passing opposite to the pontons, where the French pri-

soners are kept, the melodious voices of the ladies and the harmony of the instruments were suddenly interrupted by a cry of distress : “ This way, this way,” cried a voice sufficiently loud in French ; “ for God’s sake, save me ! ” I thought it might be some prisoner who, seeing our boat pass, had attempted his escape by swimming, in the hope of being taken in. I made a sign to the sailors, as it were to invite them to listen to the mournful accents, which had awakened in me the feeling of pity ; in me, whose breast did not burn with all the fury of hatred, as I had not experienced all the outrages of cruelty and treachery. “ A Frenchman, a Frenchman ! ” said the ladies, in a grave and pointed tone of voice, and they seemed to shudder with horror, while the sailors appeared not to hear the mournful voice, which now echoed at a distance, and now was so near our barge, that I expected every moment to see the wretched being, whom I could not but pity, enter it. I would have thrown myself into the sea, but my design was suspected and prevented : it was not possible to save a Frenchman. By degrees the cries grew weaker, and, at last, died away in the murmurs of the wind : our songs were renewed, and we soon after landed.

The next day I went to the beach, where I saw a dead body which I imagined to be that of the unfortunate being whose cries of distress I had heard the evening before ; it was naked, and laid out on a litter painted black, on each side of which was placed an extinguished flambeau. I immediately purchased a piece of coarse stuff, with which I covered the livid body, and gave the money requisite for his burial, to a man who appeared to be collecting charity from the passengers for that purpose.

In the evening, an unaccountable anxiety, an irresistible impulse urged me again to the spot where, in the morning, I had seen so disgusting an object. Not a creature was on the shore, the wind blew furiously, and I could hear nothing but the thundering noise of the angry waves. . . . Suddenly, from the very spot where the dead body had lain, and for the burial of which I had provided, there arose something vague, having no distinct form, and which appeared to me wrapped in the brown winding sheet which I had purchased in the morning. The phantom moves, advances, sometimes like a giant striding over the

ground, sometimes a round object, whirling about and describing circles constantly decreasing till they came to the centre, then lightly bounding up and disappearing, then seen again enlarged, at some distance. At first, I took it for a vapour rising out of the earth, or some of those whirlwinds of dust which assume fantastic forms, and are subject to irregular motions from the shifting of the wind. But after I got into the streets of Cadiz, I still perceived this extraordinary apparition, and as it advanced, I heard a noise like the rustling of leaves which the autumn winds strip from the trees that have lost their verdure, and blow them on, rolling and bounding along the ground.

On a sudden, the door of a house opened with a tremendous noise, and the phantom, which I followed, rushed into it with extraordinary velocity, and sunk into one of those tanks which are so common at Cadiz. Hollow groans issued from this subterraneous reservoir; I entered a passage which led me to it, and what was my astonishment at finding there the body which I had seen in the morning on the beach, and which I thought had been buried! Over the livid corpse, bent an old

Man, so motionless that he might have been supposed dead too, had it not been for the sighs that escaped from his loaded breast. A lamp fixed to the wall shed a gloomy light through this refuge of grief and death, which seemed to have received other corps besides the one I saw, for the ground was newly dug in several places. It is impossible for me to give an idea of the impression made upon me by this dismal scene: that silence of the grave, those accents of deep despair, the kneeling old man whose white hairs were confounded in colour, with the corps on which his head was bent while his hands grasped the body, and in a dark corner that very phantom which had appeared to me upon the beach, and which, continuing the same extraordinary motion, seemed sometimes to touch the top of the vault and sometimes to whirl in a circular form, altogether excited in me a sensation, not of horror, not of fear, but one which, partaking of both, kept me in a painful state and dreadful expectation.

At length the apparition seemed to me swimming in a luminous vapour, and I thought I distinguished the pallid but interesting features of a young man,

who was rolling to and fro as if rocked by waves which I imagined I heard gently murmuring. In this part of the vision there was nothing disgusting; on the contrary, I felt myself, as it were, refreshed by a light breeze, and was agreeably affected in viewing this shade which appeared to float in a silvery fluid, resembling the rays reflected by the moon.

And now a sweet voice was heard singing the soft psalmody for the dead, and presently I saw a young woman come in, clad in dazzling white: without appearing to perceive me, she knelt and continued her melancholy melody, which by degrees awakened the old man from his lethargy. “ Carlos ! Carlos !” said he in a mournful tone, and at the same moment fixing his eyes on the vision, I have just described, he gazed at it without showing any signs of surprize or emotion, then looking at the body which he had been embracing, his countenance assumed an expression of disdain and he exclaimed bitterly : “ Then it is not you, Carlos ! This body which I have snatched from the waters is not then yours ! Hear, hear, Camilla !” continued he, taking the young woman by the hand,

" I went out at dead of night and called on Carlos ; my voice was lost in the howlings of the tempest, but in spite of the tremendous noise, I believed that it had been heard in the abysses of the deep, that my Carlos's good angel had triumphed over the raging sea, and that by his interference the remains of my son would be borne to the beach that I might inter them : but alas ! they are still the sport of the waves, and look, look how they torment him"

Here the apparition vanished, and the old man, turning towards me, seeing that I sympathized in his grief, said to me. " Yes, I see that Carlos's good angel has sent you to console his aged parent. Alas ! the French assassinated my son ; after making him prisoner, they murdered him in cold blood, without asking him if he had a father, then stript him naked and threw his body into the sea. Ever since his plaintive voice awakes me in the middle of the night, calling upon me for interment : I go to the shore waiting the restitution due to me from the waves ; they throw up a lifeless body, I embrace it and carry it away with me—alas ! it proves not to be his. Thrice have I expe-

rienced this cruel mistake : how often shall I yet be deceived by my despair ? How often yet, after pressing the remains of a stranger to my bosom, shall I be undeceived by the bleeding shade of Carlos, suddenly appearing to me tossed by the waves?" Camilla shedding tears as she listened to him : " Poor child!" said he to her, " you weep because I weep, you groan because I groan ; you feel for me, and, attentive to my sorrow, never speak to me of your own, or say what you suffer for the loss of my Carlos, who was to have been your husband ; you never unveil to me that lacerated heart, but still find a smile to suspend my agonies though death is in your breast. Poor young creature ! You are decaying as fast as I am : your youth declines with my age, and we support each other in our way to the grave. Your voice calls me back to life, I revive at its pious accents ; it dispels the delusions which haunt me, it drives off the fantsoms that assail me, and when I hear it, my visions are all celestial. Oh, my child ! pure beings like you, diffuse unspeakable consolation, and in their breasts it is that God deposited a ray of his own goodness, to alleviate great grief, and prevent it from

breaking the heart of man." The old man then making me a sign to accompany him, left the dismal place, led by Camilla, who drew him gently after her.

We went into a room hung with white, and in which there was no other decoration than a picture encircled with white roses, representing a handsome young man, in the regiments of a captain of the Spanish army. By the old man's fixing his eyes upon it wildly, I found that it was the portrait of Don Carlos. Camilla looked down, perhaps from not being able to support the sight of features so beloved, perhaps from not daring to contemplate the figure of the man who was to have been her husband.

A venerable priest, who was praying with fervour as we entered, hastened to meet the old man whom he saluted by the name of brother. "Well, brother," said he, "has God granted our prayers?" The old man sat down and remained motionless, his heavy fixed look indicating the deep despair of his heart. Camilla made a motion with her head, to signify that the wretched object of her cares was still without consolation. His

features soon assumed the appearance of tranquillity, or rather of that stupor which succeeds the violent fits of frantic grief, and the distractions of wandering reason : he rose like an infant beginning to walk, on which Camilla hastened to support him, and these two beings who bore their griefs together, left us with that inattention which is the effect of great suffering.

" Father!" said I to the priest, who, though appearing extremely interested in these unhappy beings, still manifested that calm resignation which proceeds from a trust in Providence and from pureness of heart ; " Father ! how dreadful must the loss be that causes such despair ! Never did I witness so mournful, so affecting a scene ; for I must tell you that, led by the most extraordinary apparition, and by the most unaccountable event, I have seen what passed below, where the person you call brother has just been yielding himself up completely to agonizing feelings and inauspicious images."

I here related the wonderful occurrence to the venerable priest. He remained for a short time buried

in thought, then said to me : “ My son ! it does not belong to man to fix limits to what is possible or probable. The sport of imagination, he believes illusion and doubts reality. Apparitions are consecrated by so many traditions and by such respectable testimonies, that it is impossible not to believe in their existence ; but they are manifested, like the phenomena of nature, in circumstances very rare, for an end which man cannot comprehend, and from causes it would be in vain for him to attempt to trace. I will not, therefore, presume to judge by the light of my feeble reason, what is credible and real in that which has struck you. Sufficient is it for me to adore the profound designs of him, whose will it is that they should sometimes mark the dreadful indications of his vengeance, that they should communicate the most awful advice to mortals, and that they should awaken in us those solemn feelings, the impressive effect of which time itself cannot weaken.

“ Nor will I, my son, enter into any explanation of the phenomenon in the vault below : be satisfied to know, that despair produces wanderings, and grief

alienations of the understanding which cannot be cured but by extraordinary means.

“ The unfortunate man wohm you saw is my brother. Alas! prayer and solitude have not taught him that our earthly attachments ought not to take such possession of all our faculties, that they compose almost all our existence, and make us forget that there is a sublime, immortal Being, alone worthy of filling our hearts and occupying our thoughts. When death removed the object of his love, and grief overtook him, he had no fortitude, and from that time, a delirium, sometimes gloomy, sometimes furious, fastened on his mind, and I forsook the silence of the cloisters to come to him, and perform duties which nature and religion dictate.

“ The youth who is the cause of his despair, was a captain in the Spanish army ; he left home loaded with the blessings of his father, and bearing with him the hopes of his family. We heard of his exploits, we anticipated his advancement, we were doubly delighted, at once for him and for our country, by the

services he rendered at the head of his company. Conceive, my son, our shock and the distraction of his father, on receiving from Seville the copy of a letter containing the information of this young warrior, who had fought so bravely, being assassinated by the French. The words of the letter were: " We have fought: " God has not permitted our efforts to be crowned " with success, but what his providence has deferred, " his goodness, his justice, will one day fully grant, " that his own cause and also that of our King, Fer- " dinand VII, may triumph. After vainly endeavouring " to defend *****, we retreated along the coast of **** " followed by the enemy, and obliged, almost at " every step, to face him, and prepare for battle. Ha- " ving reached *****, we could take some rest, but " the difficulties occasioned by our prisoners du- " ring the march, and those which we had still to " expect from them, in the remainder of the way " we had to go, compelled us to send them on by " forced marches, the enemy imagined that, imitating " their ferocity, we had retaliated severely upon them, " and we have since heard, that it was this dreadful mis- " take, that occasioned the following horrid act. Don

“ Carlos, one of our bravest officers, eager to defend a
“ cannon which the enemy was on the point of taking,
“ and which we succeeded in saving, was made pris-
“ oner. Alas ! the assassins, into whose hands he fell,
“ did not give themselves time to ascertain the truth
“ of the supposition which had kindled their rage ;
“ they fell upon him like furious tigers, and we had the
“ pang of seeing him, from the height on which we were
“ posted, inhumanly butchered ; and the monsters af-
“ ter stripping his body, threw it into the sea. We
“ were all afflicted as well as shocked at this event, and
“ yielding to an impulse of revenge by which we
“ were greatly exposed but which, providentially, did
“ not cost us a single man, we advanced with the
“ cannon saved the day before by the noble Carlos, and
“ had the satisfaction of killing ten of the enemy.”

“ The copy of this fatal letter was put into my brother's hands just after he had received one from his son, in which, with all the fire of youth and ardour of patriotism, he wrote to him of his efforts, of his success, of the approbation of his commanders, of the esteem of his fellow soldiers. . . . Alas ! it is dreadful

to pass so rapidly from happiness to despair : the youth whom he was contemplating in the pride of daring, and in the lustre of glory, was, at the very same moment, presented to his imagination, butchered by murderers, stript of his clothes, and his lifeless body thrown into the ocean at the mercy of the waves. This contrast, which affected his brain, has ever since been the constant object of his fancy, the image that pursues him every where ; and being incessantly possessed with the hope that he shall find the body of his son upon the beach, he goes whenever there is a storm, and gazes in silence on the waves, pleased with their turbulence, as he thinks that he shall find, among the wrecks with which they cover the shore, the object of his search. If a corpse presents itself to his view, he seizes it eagerly, and with incredible strength and rapidity, bears it away to the subterraneous reservoir, into which you were led by the extraordinary apparition which you have mentioned to me.

“ At first, it was thought right to oppose this melancholy derangement, which is always attended with such violent agitations, but the dreadful effect the op-

position had upon him, soon convinced us that his life and the recovery of his reason depended upon those illusions of his grief.

" It is in vain that I speak to him or call him ; he does not hear me ; he does not know me ; he stares at me with a heavy eye, then drops his head with an indifference that shows he no longer remembers me for his brother. When he first saw Camilla, the young and beautiful maid who was betrothed to his son, he knew her and shuddered : " Come," said he to her, " you were a widow before you were a wife, you have also lost the hope and prop of your existence, come and find delight in tears, and charms in despair ; come to me, and lose your reason, by seeing the derangement of mine." From that time, Camilla has been constantly with him, and as that angel, without feeling less grief, is blessed with greater resignation, I hope, with my advice, she will succeed in gradually dispelling the illusions, and overcoming the derangement which she has incessantly in her view. Her sweet voice awakes the wretched man from his lethargy. When, bending over some dead body, he conceives that he is embracing the re-

mains of his son, she sings the prayer for the dead to him ; his eyes are opened, he is sensible of his mistake, quits the shocking scene, and leaving the vault where he had contemplated them with a heated imagination, he assuages by tears a grief which would certainly kill him were his sensations always equally violent."

I will not, my Lord, enter into a detail of the immense preparations carrying on at Cadiz, to render the place impregnable, but to those great works and its singular position it is less indebted for its safety than to the invincible courage of the inhabitants ; I shall only assure you that, from the opinion of the best officers and from my own observations, I think I may take upon me to pronounce that, if Cadiz be well defended, it will never fall in the hands of the enemy.

However, every thing assumed a new aspect under the influence of a more concentrated government, and the first care of the Regency was the meeting of the Cortes, which had been so pertinaciously resisted and so impolitically deferred by the Central Junta. The idea of this national convocation, ordered amidst the

dangers of the state, and appointed on one of the most distant spots of the Peninsula, excited my admiration and filled me with hope. I already saw in thought the representatives of that vigorous nation coming from every part of Spain to concentrate as in a focus their hatred of the usurpation and their love for their king, and I exclaimed in extacy : " Yes, in spite of the efforts of the enemy, which on all sides cut off and cripple the Spaniards, this meeting will take place ; it will take place in a corner of the country which has not been profaned and never will be profaned by his presence ; and there, with God as a witness to their oaths and his providence for their support, will the Cortes swear to confirm the independence of the nation which they represent, or leave only lifeless bodies as a prey to the vanquisher. Should the armies of the usurper advance, though heaven will probably prevent it, they will advance to be annihilated on the land desolated by their fury ; they will perish by infection on the heaped up bodies of heroes ; and such of the vanquishers as may survive, like the phantoms described to us as wandering among ruins and tombs, shall in vain implore a grave from the earth drenched with

blood and covered with bones ; they will live amidst the exhalations of death, they will live chained as it were to the dead bodies of the victims immolated by their weapons, and Europe with horror shall cry :
“ Behold the murderers who have destroyed that great
“ and brave nation, who thought to find glory in
“ murder and fortune in desolation ; struck with re-
“ morse, terror and wretchedness, they implore as a
“ blessing the death they have every where spread, but
“ implore in vain ; they are doomed to remain the
“ living image, the dreadful image of the punishment
“ reserved for those who had no generosity in their
“ enterprizes, no pity in their battles.”

After thus exhausting my wishes for the Spaniards, my looks and thoughts turned to that other Spain which, in her loyalty and sacrifices, has rivalled the mother-country, to that country in which the soul is continually elevated by the sublime objects of nature, to that still virgin land, which appears to offer its treasures and its blessings to the proscribed children of Europe, and a part of which, rising like an immense dyke between the two oceans that surround the globe, is perhaps

destined to collect in its bosom, the arts, sciences and literature, if ever a barbarous system should banish them from Europe; in short, to that nation little known and scarcely studied, of the power, moral faculties, and physical ressources of which one has no idea, and which promises some day to astonish the universe by its refinement in knowledge, if nothing arrests the rapid progress it is making towards civilization.

Already have that people, who may be regarded as the great hope of the world, proved that they are no strangers to the exalted sentiments which animate the nation to which they are attached by the ties of nature and of policy. The feelings which electrified and roused the Spaniards of Europe have had the same effect upon those of America. So the same winds which raise the angry waves on the western coast of the Atlantic, make the tempests howl upon its southern shores. On the intelligence of the outrage committed on the Spanish nation, there was not a man in America that was not shocked and who did not burn with the desire of vengeance, nor was there a wealthy person who

did not instantly open his coffers to supply the wants of the mother-country.

Americans ! I will one day come and visit you, I will come and contemplate among you, the grand phenomena of nature, the elevated plain of Mexico, that immense pedestal in the middle of which rise the gigantic mountains of the world, those volcanoes of colossal dimensions, which raise to immense heights their towering heads, crowned at once with perpetual fires and everlasting snows. I will come and see that enormous mountain, whose top is an extended plain and whose sides slope down on the west and on the east, to the level of the Pacific Ocean and of the Gulf of Mexico, affording successively all the climates of the temperate and torrid Zones ; I will descend into those mines whence you draw that gold which you deliver over, with the disdain of wisdom, or the indifference of satiety, to the covetous Europeans whose idol it is, that gold, which becomes the object of an ambition that knows no bounds but those of the world, would have served to support the wars which desolate Europe, had

it not been for the great and noble stand made by your brethren.

I will come and look among you for instances of generosity, friendship and hospitality, so rare at present in European society; I will come and contemplate the spontaneous advances you have made in the arts and sciences, in spite of the shackles in which you were held by the government of the mother-country, which became enlightened only when it began to decline, and kindly disposed only when it had lost by its weakness, the means of ameliorating your institutions.

While Europe, grown old, is swimming in blood, and under the influence of the military despotism, takes retrograde steps in civilization, which seem to announce the approach of that periodical decay, brought on by the revolution of a certain number of ages, and with which all polished nations are threatened in their turn; while the right of the sword there supersedes that of nations, and the art of war is preferred to those of peace; and while justice is there stifled by violence, you have

successively corrected a part of the abuses which clogged the flight of your imagination and the progress of your industry, and opened the way for the annihilation of those feuds and rivalries that divided your population.

Perhaps, one day, when Europe shall be nothing more than deserts, where man, fallen into a state approaching barbarism, shall be reduced to a wandering life, new towns will rise over your Continent, so favorable to population, and where such a number of physical causes contribute to give to vegetation, that strength, that luxuriancy, which no revolution of the globe seems able to deprive it of; perhaps, one day, your Spanish brethren and other unfortunate Europeans, coming to ask you for a shelter against that political tempest, which in its dreadful convulsions, has involved almost all the nations of Continental Europe, will be welcomed by you, and will contend for your fertile, but uncultivated plains, with the great maneless lion, with the tiger, strong enough to drag the young bull he kills to the mountain top, with the boa which, suspended on the palm-tree, waits for the enormous prey

to be absorbed in his dilated throat, in short, with the alligator, which, sleeping in the dried mud, while the heated wind of the desert blows, leaves his tomb at the first drops of rain which fall, and awakens from his seeming death.

Then will the great European emigration take place, and those *Llanos* which call for the arm of man to open the sources of vegetation, will be less fatal to him, in the first labours of clearing them, than the soil he will have left, than that land adorned with all the prodigies of the arts, but desolated by all the scourges attendant upon perpetual wars and the decomposition of society.

Americans ! while I was among the icy mountains of the Pole, or when from the banks of the Nile, my eyes darted over that immense desert of sand, which crosses Africa like a dried arm of the sea, my thoughts had already flown to that Continent, whose refreshing breezes wafted to Christopher Columbus, as he was approaching it, an air so pure, odours so balsamic, that he conceived himself at no great distance from the garden of

Eden, that sacred residence of the first of human kind.

When my country, sinking under the accumulated power of a part of Europe, no longer presented me aught but painful recollections, mournful scenes, and an existence against which my independent soul revolted, even then, my wishes and my dreams transported me to you in imagination, and I said : “ I will go first into that Spain which invites every man, capable of admiring whatever is great and heroic, and calls for the assistance of all who are not disabled by the feebleness of age, withheld by worldly motives, or enslaved by a tyranny oppressing mankind. I shall be adopted by the brave Spaniards, and I will be worthy of their adoption.

But conquering or conquered, I will go and visit those distant countries, where man is found in all his native vigour, and nature in all her original beauty. If the Spaniards, overpowered rather than subdued, should be obliged to yield, for a time, to the ascendancy of a power which has crushed so many thrones and nations,

and of a policy which deceives to subjugate, and which obtains success, as much by its intrigues as by its boldness; if, without relinquishing my hope, my certainty that that great nation, however it may be stunned by the blows of the overgrown power that attacks it, will never be crushed, I should be obliged to quit that land which I have chosen for my country, then will I betake myself to that new Spain, so worthy of the name which it bears, and where I shall find so many motives of consolation and of hope.

Americans! I ask only a hut, where, if I find liberty, I shall enjoy happiness. How often, amidst disasters I have witnessed, beneath the impression of mournful ideas and of the bitter feelings which they have excited, how often has my spirit wandered in your solitudes and my heart sighed for their mysterious charms! I have even envied the independent life of that nation of the Guaranis, who, amidst your savannahs, compose an aerial republic on the summit of the *Mauritia*, of those trees which, by a secret attraction preserve around them, a delightful coolness amidst the scorching draught of the desert. And what are our Eu-

ropean enjoyments, our dignities, our social distinctions if unaccompanied with honour and liberty! if the dreams of terror or the miseries of slavery, poison every tender and generous sentiment ; and if one must groan, languish, and die away in the impure atmosphere with which despotism surrounds its unhappy victims ! No, rather than live in shame, I will go and pitch my hut in those lonely regions where eternal snows begin, where animated nature ends, and where the eye perceives no living creature but the gigantic Condor, which winging its way above the clouds, bears its prey to the summits of the volcanoes.

Are those ever-burning volcanoes so destructive as our own perpetual discords? Are the hollow bellowings which issue from their heated sides, so formidable as the thunders of war ? Does the poisoned nail of the wild Ottomaque give wounds more mortal or more painful than those which we receive in the bosom of European society, from the envenomed darts of calumny ? And have I more to dread from those horrid alligators which I unwarily tread upon, deceived by their stillness or by the mud that covers them, than

from the concealed enemy who lays snares for me in the world, or assassinates me in the silence of the wood?

Pardon me, my Lord, if swayed by the recollection of the evils I have witnessed, of the intrigues and treachery to which I have ever seen loyalty fall a victim on the Continent of Europe, I have yielded to misanthropic effusions; it is not in your glorious country, it is not in England that I have met with those sad examples of the perversity of man: is it possible to find any among the countrymen of the exalted character for whom I entertain so high an esteem and so warm a friendship?

GERAMB.

London, July 20, 1810



HSP Geramb, Ferdinand, baron de
G3547kx Letter to Earl Moira...on the Spaniards and
.E Cadiz

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